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C O N F I D E N T I A L ABU DHABI 03324

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RUCPDOE/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
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STATE FOR EB A/S WAYNE  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/22/2014  
TAGS: [KBCT](#) [ELAB](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [TC](#)  
SUBJECT: TIFA UPDATE: UAE MOVING ON ARAB LEAGUE BOYCOTT AND  
LABOR LAW REWRITE

REF: A. A) ABU DHABI 3270  
[B](#). B) ABU DHABI 3205  
[C](#). C) ABU DHABI 3054

Classified by Ambassador Michele Sison for reasons 1.5 (b and d)

[1](#). (SBU) Summary: Pursuing our TIFA discussions, MFA Undersecretary Abdullah Rashid Al-Noaimi told the Ambassador on 9/22 that MFA is working closely with the Ministry of Economy and Commerce on resolving Arab League Boycott concerns. He also confirmed that the new draft labor law was under technical review and suggested that the review was about 80% completed. He stressed that the UAEG viewed its unique third-country national labor demographic as a security issue. End Summary.

[2](#). (SBU) MFA U/S Abdullah Rashid Al-Noaimi (defacto number 2) told the Ambassador on September 22 that the MFA had met with the Ministry of Economy and Commerce (MoEC) to work on resolving the Arab League Boycott issues, based on the information that we had provided them on Netafim and broader boycott concerns. He added that MFA Assistant Undersecretary for International Cooperation Mohammed Abdul Jaleel (his new point person for managing strategic relationships) was following up vigorously with MoEC on this matter. Al-Noaimi explained that revising the tender and procurement documents would be a process that could take time, but that the UAE was taking the necessary actions.

[3](#). (SBU) Al-Noaimi also told Ambassador that the revised

draft labor law was under review in the Technical Legislative Committee and he thought it was about 80% complete. Ambassador pressed him to ensure that the UAEG delegation to the TIFA Council meeting was prepared to articulate its thoughts on labor in detail during the discussions. MFA will sensitize MoL to the importance of the issue and we will be meeting with the Ministry of Labor Undersecretary on Saturday 9/25 to follow-up. Al-Noaimi confirmed that the UAE consulted with the ILO on its labor law and was keenly aware of ILO's concerns.

14. (C) Al-Noaimi underscored that the labor issue was a sensitive national security matter for the UAEG. He noted that expatriates make up the overwhelming majority of the population (80%-85%) and that the expatriate population was very diverse (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, etc.). He stressed that the UAE certainly wanted to protect workers' rights, but also needed to protect its own security. He cited the problem of illegal migration of Afghans and Pakistanis across the Omani border as one of the problems that the UAE faced, implying that it was relatively easy for these illegal migrants to fit into the large South Asian population in the UAE. On the other hand, he noted that the Department of Labor tended to side with workers over employees in a significant number of the cases on which it ruled.

SISON